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- ART. VIII.—1. *The American Conflict: a History of the Great Rebellion in the United States of America, 1860–64: its Causes, Incidents, and Results; intended to Exhibit especially its Moral and Political Phases, with the Drift and Progress of American Opinion respecting Human Slavery from 1776 to the Close of the War for the Union.* By HORACE GREELEY. Illustrated, &c., &c. Vol. I. Hartford: O. D. Case & Co. 1864. 8vo. pp. 648.
2. *The Southern History of the War. The First Year of the War.* By EDWARD A. POLLARD, Author of “Black Diamonds,” &c. Corrected and Improved Edition. Richmond: West and Johnston. 1862. Reprinted by C. B. Richardson, New York. 1864. pp. 389.

IN spite of the popular theory, that nothing is so fallacious as circumstantial evidence, there is no man of observation who would not deem it more trustworthy than any human testimony, however honest, which was made up from personal recollection. The actors in great affairs are seldom to be depended on as witnesses either to the order of events or their bearing upon results; for even where selfish interest is not to be taken into account, the mythic instinct ere long begins to shape things as they ought to have been, rather than as they were. This is true even of subjects in which we have no personal interest, and not only do no two men describe the same street-scene in the same way, but the same man, unless prosaic to a degree below the freezing-point of Tupper, will never do it twice in the same way. Few men, looking into their old diaries, but are astonished at the contrast, sometimes even the absolute unlikeness, between the matters of fact recorded there and their own recollection of them. Shortly after the battle of Lexington it was the interest of the Colonies to make the British troops not only wanton, but unresisted aggressors; and if primitive Christians could be manufactured by affidavit, so large a body of them ready to turn the other cheek also was never gathered as in the minute-men before the meeting-house on the 19th of April, 1775. The Anglo-Saxon could not fight comfortably without the law on his side. But later,

when the battle became a matter of local pride, the muskets that had been fired at the Redcoats under Pitcairn almost rivalled in number the pieces of furniture that came over in the Mayflower. Indeed, whoever has talked much with Revolutionary pensioners knows that those honored veterans were no less remarkable for imagination than for patriotism. It should seem that there is, perhaps, nothing on which so little reliance is to be placed as facts, especially when related by one who saw them. It is no slight help to our charity to recollect that, in disputable matters, every man sees according to his prejudices, and is stone-blind to whatever he did not expect or did not mean to see. Even where no personal bias can be suspected, contemporary and popular evidence is to be taken with great caution, so exceedingly careless are men as to exact truth, and such poor observers, for the most part, of what goes on under their eyes. The ballad which was hawked about the streets at the execution of Captain Kidd, and which was still to be bought at street-stalls within a few years, affirms three times in a single stanza that the pirate's name was Robert. Yet he was commissioned, indicted, convicted, and hanged as William Kidd. The marvels of Spiritualism are supernatural to the average observer, who is willing to pay for that dulness from another world which he might have for nothing in this, while they seem mere legerdemain, and not of the highest quality, to the trained organs of scientific men.

History, we are told, is philosophy teaching by example. But how if the example does not apply? Le Verrier discovers Neptune when, according to his own calculations, the planet should not have been in the place where his telescope found it. Does the example redound to the credit of luck or of mathematics? The historian may give a thoroughly false view of an event by simply assuming that *after* means *in consequence of*, or even by the felicitous turn of a sentence. Style will find readers and shape convictions, while mere truth only gathers dust on the shelf. The memory first, and by degrees the judgment, is enslaved by the epigrams of Tacitus or Michellet. Our conception of scenes and men is outlined and colored for us by the pictorial imagination of Carlyle. Indeed, after reading history, one can only turn round, with Montaigne,

and say, *What know I?* There was a time when the reputation of Judas might have been thought past mending, but a German has whitewashed him as thoroughly as Malone did Shakespeare's bust, and an English poet made him the hero of a tragedy, as the one among the disciples who believed too much. Call no one happy till he is dead? Rather call no one safe, whether in good repute or evil, after he has been dead long enough to have his effigy done in historical wax-work. Only get the real clothes, that is, only be careful to envelope him in a sufficiently probable dressing of facts, and the public will be entirely satisfied. What's Hecuba to us, or we to Hecuba? Or is Thackeray's way any nearer the truth, who strips Louis the Great of all his stage-properties, and shows him to us the miserable forked radish of decrepitude?

There are many ways of writing what is called history. The earliest and simplest was to record in the form of annals, without investigating, whatever the writer could lay hold of, the only thread of connection being the order of time, so that events have no more relation to each other than so many beads on a string. Higher than this, because more picturesque, and because living men take the place of mere names, are the better class of chronicles, like Froissart's, in which the scenes sometimes have the minute vividness of illumination, and the page seems to take life and motion as we read. The annalist still survives, a kind of literary dodo, in the "standard" historian, respectable, immitigable, — with his philosophy of history, and his stereotyped phrase, his one Amurath succeeding another, so very dead, so unlike anything but historical characters, that we can scarce believe they ever lived, — and only differing from his ancient congener of the monastery by his skill in making ten words do the duty of one. His are the fatal books without which no gentleman's library can be complete, his the storied pages which ingenuous youth is invited to turn, and is apt to turn four or five together. With him something is still always sure to transpire in the course of these negotiations, still the traditional door is opened to the inroad of democratic innovation, still it is impossible to interpret the motives which inspired the conduct of so-and-so in this particular emergency. So little does he himself conceive of any possible past

or future life in his characters, that he periphrases death into a disappearance from the page of history, as if they were bodiless and soulless creatures of pen and ink, mere names, not things. Picturesqueness he sternly avoids as the Delilah of the philosophic mind, liveliness as a snare of the careless investigator, and so, stopping both ears, he slips safely by those Sirens, keeping safe that sobriety of style which his fellow-men call by another name. Unhappy books, which we know by heart *before* we read them, and which a mysterious superstition yet compels many unoffending persons to read! What has not the benevolent reader had to suffer at the hands of the so-called impartial historian, who, wholly disinterested and disinteresting, writes with as mechanic an industry, and as little emotion, as he would have brought to the weaving of calico or the digging of potatoes, under other circumstances! Far truer at least to nature and to some conceivable theory of an immortal soul in man, is the method of the poet, who makes his personages luminous from within by an instinctive sympathy with human motives of action, and a conception of the essential unity of character through every change of fate.

Of late years men have begun to question the prescriptive right of this "great gyant Asdryasdust, who has choked many men," to choke them also because he had worked his wicked will on their fathers. It occurred to an inquiring mind here and there, that, if the representation of men's action and passion on the theatre could be made interesting, there was no good reason why the great drama of history should be dull as a miracle-play. Need philosophy teaching by example be so tiresome that the pupils would rather burst in ignorance than go within ear-shot of the pedagogue? Hence the historical romance, sometimes honestly called so, and limited by custom in number of volumes, sometimes not called so, and without any such limitation. This latter variety admits several styles of treatment. Sometimes a special epoch is chosen, where one heroic figure may serve as a centre round which events and subordinate characters group themselves, with no more sacrifice of truth than is absolutely demanded by artistic keeping. This may be called the epic style, of which Carlyle is the acknowledged master. Sometimes a period is selected, where the

facts, by coloring and arrangement, may be made to support the views of a party, and history becomes a political pamphlet indefinitely prolonged. Here point is the one thing needful,—to be attained at all hazards, whether by the turn of a sentence or the twisting of a motive. Macaulay is pre-eminent in this kind, and woe to the party or the man that comes between him and his epigrammatic necessity ! Again, there is the new light, or perhaps, more properly, the forlorn-hope method, where the author accepts a brief against the *advocatus diaboli*, and strives to win a reverse of judgment, as Mr. Froude has done in the case of Henry VIII. The latest fashion of all is the *a priori*, in which a certain dominant principle is taken for granted, and everything is deduced from *x*, instead of serving to prove what *x* may really be. The weakness of this heroic treatment, it seems to us, is in allowing too little to human nature as an element in the problem. This would be a fine world, if facts would only be as subservient to theory in real life as in the author's inkstand. Mr. Buckle stands at the head of this school, and has just found a worthy disciple in M. Taine, who, in his *Histoire de la Littérature Anglaise*, having first assumed certain ethnological postulates, seems rather to shape the character of the literature to the race, than to illustrate that of the race by the literature.

In short, whether we consider the incompetence of men in general as observers, their carelessness about things at the moment indifferent, but which may become of consequence hereafter, (as, for example, in the dating of letters,) their want of impartiality, both in seeing and stating occurrences, and in tracing or attributing motives, it is plain that history is not to be depended on in any absolute sense. That smooth and indifferent quality of mind, without a flaw of prejudice or a blur of theory, which can reflect passing events as they truly are, is as rare, if not so precious, as that artistic sense which can hold the mirror up to nature. The fact that there is so little historical or political prescience, that no man of experience ventures to prophesy, is enough to prove, either that it is impossible to know all the terms of our problem, or that history does not repeat itself with anything like the exactness of coincidence which is so pleasing to the imagination. Six months after the

coup d'état of December, 1851, Mr. Savage Landor, who knew him well, said to us that Louis Napoleon had ten times the political sagacity of his uncle ; but who foresaw or foretold an Augustus in the dull-eyed frequenter of Lady Blessington's, the melodramatic hero of Strasburg and Bologne, with his cocked hat and eagle from Astley's ? What insurance company would have taken the risk of his hare-brained adventure ? Coleridge used to take credit to himself for certain lucky vaticinations, but his memory was always inexact, his confounding of what he did and what he thought he meant to do always to be suspected, and his prophecies, when examined, are hardly more precise than an ancient oracle or a couplet of Nostradamus. The almanac-makers took the wisest course, stretching through a whole month their "about this time expect a change of weather."

That history repeats itself has become a kind of truism, but of as little practical value in helping us to form our opinions as other similar labor-saving expedients to escape thought. Sceptical minds see in human affairs a regular oscillation ; hopeful ones, a continual progress, and both can support their creeds with abundance of pertinent example. Both seem to admit a law of recurrence, but the former make it act in a circle, the latter in a spiral. There is, no doubt, one constant element in the reckoning, namely, human nature, and perhaps another in human nature itself, — the tendency to reaction from all extremes ; but the way in which these shall operate, and the force they shall exert, are dependent on a multitude of new and unpredictable circumstances. Coincidences there certainly are, but our records are hardly yet long enough to furnish the basis for secure induction. Such parallelisms are merely curious, and entertain the fancy rather than supply precedent for the judgment. When Tacitus tells us that gladiators have not so much stomach for fighting as soldiers, we remember our own roughs and shoulder-hitters at the beginning of the war, and are inclined to think that Macer and Billy Wilson illustrated a general truth. But, unfortunately, Octavius found prize-fighters of another metal, not to speak of Spartacus. Perhaps the objections to our making use of colored soldiers (*hic niger est, hunc tu, Romane, caveto*) will seem as absurd one of these days

as the outcry that Cæsar was degrading the service by enlisting Gauls ; but we will not hazard a prophecy. In the alarm of the Pannonian revolt, his nephew recruited the army of Italy by a conscription of slaves, who thereby became free, and this measure seems to have been acquiesced in by the unwarlike citizens, who preferred that the experiment of death should be made *in corpore vili* rather than in their own persons.

If the analogies between past and present were as precise as they are sometimes represented to be, if Time really dotes and repeats his old stories, then ought students of history to be the best statesmen. Yet, with Guizot for an adviser, Louis Philippe, himself the eyewitness of two revolutions, became the easy victim of a third. Reasoning from what has been to what will be is apt to be paralogistic at the best. Much influence must still be left to chance, much accounted for by what pagans called Fate, and we Providence. We can only say, *Victrix causa diis placuit*, and Cato must make the best of it. What is called poetical justice, that is, an exact subservience of human fortunes to moral laws, so that the actual becomes the liege vassal of the ideal, is so seldom seen in the events of real life, that even the gentile world felt the need of a future state of rewards and punishments to make the scale of Divine justice even, and satisfy the cravings of the soul. Our sense of right, or of what we believe to be right, is so pleased with an example of retribution, that a single instance is allowed to outweigh the many in which wrong escapes unwhipped. It was remarked that sudden death overtook the purchasers of certain property bequeathed for pious uses in England, and sequestered at the Reformation. Fuller tells of a Sir Miles Pateridge, who threw dice with the king for Jesus' bells, and how "the ropes after caught about his neck," he being hanged in the reign of Edward VI. But at least a fifth of the land in England was held by suppressed monasteries, and the metal for the victorious cannon of revolutionary France once called to the service of the Prince of Peace from consecrated spires. We err in looking for a visible and material penalty, as if God imposed a fine of mishap for the breach of his statutes. Seldom, says Horace, has penalty lost the scent of crime, yet, on second thought, he makes the sleuth-hound lame. Slow seems the

sword of Divine justice, adds Dante, to him who longs to see it smite. The cry of all generations has been, "How long, O Lord?" Where crime has its root in weakness of character, that same weakness is likely to play the avenger; but where it springs from that indifference as to means and that contempt of consequences which are likely to be felt by a strong nature, intent upon its end, it would be hardy to reckon on the same dramatic result. And if we find this difficulty in the cases of individual men, it is even more rash to personify nations, and deal out to them our little vials of Divine retribution as if we were the general dispensaries of doom. Shall we lay to a nation the sins of a line of despots whom it cannot shake off? If we accept too blindly the theory of national responsibility, we ought, by parity of reason, to admit success as a valid proof of right. The moralists of fifty years ago, who saw the democratic orgies of France punished with Napoleon, whose own crimes brought him in turn to the rock of Prometheus, how would they explain the phenomenon of Napoleon III.? The readiness to trace a too close and consequent relation between public delinquencies and temporal judgments seems to us a superstition holding over from the time when each race, each family even, had its private and tutelary divinity, — a mere refinement of fetichism. The world has too often seen "captive good attending captain ill" to believe in a providence that sets man-traps and spring-guns for the trespassers on its domain, and Christianity, perhaps, elevated man in no way so much as in making every one personally, not gregariously, answerable for his doings or not-doings, and thus inventing conscience, as we understand its meaning. But just in proportion as the private citizen is enlightened, does he become capable of an influence on that manifold result of thought, sentiment, reason, impulse, magnanimity, and meanness, which, as Public Opinion, has now so great a share in shaping the destiny of nations. And in this sense does he become responsible, and out of the aggregate of such individual responsibilities we can assume a common complicity in the guilt of common wrong-doing.

But surely the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth; and though we do not believe in his so immediate interference in events as would satisfy our impatience of injustice, yet he achieves his

ends and brings about his compensations by having made Good infinitely and eternally lovely to the soul of man, while the beauty of Evil is but a brief cheat, which their own lusts put upon the senses of her victims. And it is surely fixed as the foundations of the earth, that faithfulness to right and duty, self-sacrifice, loyalty to that service whose visible reward is often but suffering and baffled hope, draw strength and succor from exhaustless springs far up in those delectable mountains of trial, which the All-knowing has set between us and the achievement of every noble purpose. History teaches, at least, that wrong can reckon on no alliance with the diviner part of man, while every high example of virtue, though it led to the stake or the scaffold, becomes a part of the reserved force of humanity, and from generation to generation summons kindred natures to the standard of righteousness as with the sound of a trumpet. There is no such reinforcement as faith in God, and that faith is impossible till we have squared our policy and conduct with our highest instincts. In the loom of time, though the woof be divinely foreordained, yet man supplies the weft, and the figures of the endless web are shaped and colored by our own wisdom or folly. Let no nation think themselves safe in being merely right, unless their captains are inspired and sustained by a sense of it.

We do not believe that history supplies any trustworthy data for casting the horoscope of our war. America is something without precedent. Moreover, such changes have been going on in the social and moral condition of nations, as to make the lessons of even comparatively recent times of little import in forming conclusions on contemporary affairs. Formerly a fact not yet forgetful of its etymology was a thing done, a deed, and in a certain sense implied, truly enough, the predominance of individual actors and prevailing characters. But powerful personalities are becoming of less and less account, when facility of communication has given both force and the means of exerting it to the sentiment of civilized mankind, and when commerce has made the banker's strong-box a true temple of Janus, the shutting or opening of which means peace or war. Battles are decisive now not so much by the destruction of armies as by the defeat of public spirit, and a something

that has actually happened may be a less important fact, either in conjecturing probabilities or determining policy, than the indefinable progress of change, not marked on any dial, but instinctively divined, that is taking place in the general thought.

The history of no civil war can be written without bias, scarcely without passionate prejudice. It is always hard for men to conceive the honesty or intelligence of those who hold other opinions, or indeed to allow them the *right* to think for themselves; but in troubled times the blood mounts to the head, and colors the judgment, giving to suspicions and fancies the force of realities, and intensifying personal predilections, till they seem the pith and substance of national duties. Even where the office of historian is assumed in the fairest temper, it is impossible that the narrative of events whose bearing is so momentous should not insensibly take somewhat the form of an argument, — that the political sympathies of the author should not affect his judgment of men and measures. And in such conflicts, far more than in ordinary times, as the stake at issue is more absorbing and appeals more directly to every private interest and patriotic sentiment, so men, as they become prominent, and more or less identified with this or that policy, at last take the place of principles with the majority of minds. To agree with us is to be a great commander, a prudent administrator, a politician without private ends.

The contrast between the works of Mr. Pollard and Mr. Greeley is very striking. Though coincident in design, they are the antipodes of each other in treatment. Mr. Greeley, finding a country beyond measure prosperous suddenly assailed by rebellion, is naturally led to seek an adequate cause for so abnormal an effect. Mr. Pollard, formerly an office-holder under the United States, and now the editor of a Richmond newspaper, is struck by the same reflection, and, unwilling to state the true cause, or unable to find a plausible reason, is driven to hunt up an excuse for what strikes ordinary people as one of the greatest crimes in history. The difference is instructive.

Mr. Pollard's book, however, is well worth reading by those who wish to learn something of the motives which originally led the Southern States into rebellion, and still actuate them in

their obstinate resistance. To any one familiar with the history of the last thirty years, it would almost seem that Mr. Pollard's object had been to expose the futility of the pretences set up by the originators of Secession, so utterly does he fail in showing any adequate grounds for that desperate measure. As a history, the book is of little value, except as giving us here and there a hint by which we can guess something of the state of mind prevailing at the South. In point of style it is a curious jumble of American sense and Southern *highfaluting*. One might fancy it written by a schoolmaster, whose boys had got hold of the manuscript, and inserted here and there passages taken at random from the *Gems of Irish Oratory*. Mr. Pollard's notions of the "Yankees," and the condition of things among them, would be creditable to a Chinaman from pretty well up in the back-country. No society could hold together for a moment in the condition of moral decay which he attributes to the Northern States. Before writing his next volume he should read Charles Lamb's advice "to those who have the framing of advertisements for the apprehension of offenders." We must do him the justice to say, however, that he writes no nonsense about difference of races, and that, of all "Yankees," he most thoroughly despises the Northern snob who professes a sympathy for "Southern institutions" because he believes that a slaveholder is a better man than himself.

In narrating the causes which brought about the present state of things, Mr. Pollard arranges matters to suit his own convenience, constantly reversing the relations of cause and effect, and forgetting that the order of events is of every importance in estimating their moral bearing. The only theoretic reason he gives for Secession is the desire to escape from the tyranny of a "numerical majority." Yet it was by precisely such a majority, and that attained by force or fraud, that the seceding States were taken out of the Union. We entirely agree with Mr. Pollard, that a show of hands is no test of truth ; but he seems to forget that, except under a despotism, a numerical majority of some sort or other is sure to govern. No man capable of thought, as Mr. Pollard certainly is, would admit that a majority was any more likely to be right under

a system of limited than under one of universal suffrage, always provided the said majority did not express his own opinions. The majority always govern in the long run, because it comes gradually round to the side of what is just and for the common interest, and the only dangerous majority is that of a mob unchecked by the delay for reflection which all constitutional government interposes. The constitutions of most of the Slave States, so far as white men are concerned, are of the most intensely democratic type. Would Mr. Polard consolidate them all under one strong government, or does he believe that to be good for a single state which is bad for many united? It is curious to see, in his own intense antipathy to a slaveholding aristocracy, how purely American he is in spite of his theories; and, bitterly hostile as he is to the Davis administration, he may chance on the reflection that a majority is pretty much the same thing in one parallel of latitude as another. Of one thing he may be assured,—that we of the North do not understand by republic a government of the better and more intelligent class by the worse and more ignorant, and accordingly are doing our best by education to abolish the distinction between the two.

The fact that no adequate reasons for Secession have ever been brought forward, either by the Seceding States at the time, or by their apologists since, can only be explained on the theory that nothing more than a *coup d'état* was intended, which should put the South in possession of the government. Owing to the wretched policy (if supineness deserve the name) largely prevalent in the North, of sending to the lower house of Congress the men who needed rather than those who ought to go there,—men without the responsibility or the independence which only established reputation, social position, long converse with great questions, or native strength of character can give,—and to the habit of looking on a seat in the national legislature more as a reward for partisan activity than as imposing a service of the highest nature, so that representatives were changed as often as there were new political debts to pay or cliques to be conciliated,—owing to these things, the South maintained an easy superiority at Washington, and learned to measure the Free States by men who represented

their weakest, and sometimes their least honorable characteristics. We doubt if the Slave States have sent many men to the Capitol who could be bought, while it is notorious that from the north of Mason and Dixon's line many an M. C. has cleared, like a ship, for Washington and a market. Southern politicians judge the North by men without courage and without principle, who would consent to any measure if it could be becomingly draped in generalities, or if they could evade the pillory of the yeas and nays. The increasing drain of forensic ability toward the large cities, with the mistaken theory that residence in the district was a necessary qualification in candidates, tended still more to bring down the average of Northern representation. The "claims" of a section of the State, or even part of a district, have been allowed to have weight, as if square miles or acres were to be weighed against capacity and experience. We attached too little importance to the social prestige which the South acquired and maintained at the seat of government, forgetting the necessary influence it would exert upon the independence of many of our own members. These in turn brought home the new impressions they had acquired, till the fallacy gradually became conviction of a general superiority in the South, though it had only so much truth in it as this, that the people of that section sent their men of character and position to Washington, and kept them there till every year of experience added an efficiency which more than made up for their numerical inferiority. Meanwhile, our thinking men allowed, whether from timidity or contempt, certain demagogic fallacies to become axioms by dint of repetition, chief among which was the notion that a man was a better representative of the democratic principle who had contrived to push himself forward to popularity by whatever means, and who represented the average instead of the highest culture of the community, thus establishing an aristocracy of mediocrity, nay, even of vulgarity, in some less intelligent constituencies. The one great strength of democracy is, that it opens all the highways of power and station to the better man, that it gives every man the chance of rising to his natural level, and its great weakness is in its tendency to urge this principle to a vicious excess, by pushing men forward into positions for which they

are unfit, not so much because they deserve to rise, or because they^have risen by great qualities, as because they began low. Our quadriennial change of offices, which turns public service into a matter of bargain and sale instead of the reward of merit and capacity, which sends men to Congress to represent private interests in the sharing of plunder, without regard to any claims of statesmanship or questions of national policy, as if the ship of state were periodically captured by privateers, has hastened our downward progress in the evil way. By making the administration prominent at the cost of the government, and by its constant lesson of scramble and vicissitude, almost obliterating the idea of orderly permanence, it has tended in no small measure to make disruption possible, for Mr. Lincoln's election threw the weight of every office-holder in the South into the scale of Secession. The war, however, has proved that the core of Democracy was sound, that the people, if they had been neglectful of their duties, or had misapprehended them, had not become corrupt.

Mr. Greeley's volume is a valuable contribution to our political history. Though for many years well known as an ardent politician, and associated by popular prejudice with that class of untried social theories which are known by the name of *isms*, his tone is singularly calm and dispassionate. Disfigured here and there by a vulgarism which adds nothing to its point, while it detracts from its purity, his style is clear, straightforward, and masculine, — a good business style, at once bare of ornament and undiluted with eloquence. Mr Greeley's intimate knowledge of our politics and instinctive sympathy with the far-reaching scope of our institutions (for, as Béranger said of himself, he is *tout peuple*) admirably fitted him for his task. He is clear, concise, and accurate, honestly striving after the truth, while his judicious Preface shows that he appreciates fully the difficulties that beset whoever seeks to find it. If none of his readers will be surprised to find his work that of an able man, there are many who would not expect it to be, as it is, that of a fair-minded one. He writes without passion, making due allowance for human nature in the South as well as the North, and does not waste his strength, as is the manner of fanatics, in fighting imaginary giants while a real enemy is in

the field. Tracing Secession to its twin sources in Slavery and the doctrine of State Rights, and amply sustaining his statements of fact by citations from contemporary documents and speeches, he has made the plainest, and for that very reason, we think, the strongest argument that has been put forth on the national side of the question at issue in our civil war. Above all, he is ready to allow those virtues in the character of the Southern people whose existence alone makes reunion desirable or possible. We should not forget that the Negro is at least *no more* our brother than they, for if he have fallen among thieves who have robbed him of his manhood, they have been equally enslaved by prejudice, ignorance, and social inferiority.

It is not a little singular that, while slavery has been for nearly eighty years the one root of bitterness in our politics, the general knowledge of its history should be so superficial. Abolitionism has been so persistently represented as the disturbing element which threatened the permanence of our Union, that mere repetition has at last become conviction with that large class of minds with which a conclusion is valuable exactly in proportion as it saves mental labor. Mr. Greeley's chronological narrative is an excellent corrective of this delusion, and his tough little facts, driven firmly home, will serve to spike this parrot battery, and render it harmless for the future. A consecutive statement of such of the events in our history as bear directly on the question of Slavery, separated from all secondary circumstances, shows two things clearly ; — first, that the doctrine that there was any national obligation to consider slaves as merely property, or to hold our tongues about slavery, is of comparatively recent origin ; and, second, that there was a pretty uniform ebb of antislavery sentiment for nearly sixty years after the adoption of the Constitution, the young flood beginning to set strongly in again after the full meaning of the annexation of Texas began to be understood at the North, but not fairly filling up again even its own deserted channels till the Southern party succeeded in cutting the embankment of the Missouri Compromise. Then at last it became evident that the real danger to be guarded against was the abolition of Freedom, and the reaction was as violent as it was sudden.

In the early days of the Republic slavery was admitted to be a social and moral evil, only to be justified by necessity; and we think it more than doubtful if South Carolina and Georgia could have procured an extension of the slave-trade, had there not been a general persuasion that the whole system could not long maintain itself against the growth of intelligence and humanity. As early as 1786 a resident of South Carolina wrote: "In countries where slavery is encouraged, the ideas of the people are of a peculiar cast; the soul becomes dark and narrow, and assumes a tone of savage brutality. The most elevated and liberal Carolinians abhor slavery; they will not debase themselves by attempting to vindicate it." In 1789 William Pinckney said, in the Maryland Assembly: "Sir, by the eternal principles of natural justice, no master in the State has a right to hold his slave in bondage for a single hour." And he went on to speak of slavery in a way which, fifty years later, would have earned him a coat of tar and fathers, if not a halter, in any of the Slave States, and in some of the Free. In 1787 Delaware passed an act forbidding the importation of "negro or mulatto slaves into the State for sale or otherwise"; and three years later her courts declared a slave, hired in Maryland and brought over the border, free under this statute. In 1790 there were Abolition societies in Maryland and Virginia. In 1787 the Synod of the Presbyterian Church, (since called the General Assembly,) in their pastoral letter, "strongly recommended the abolition of slavery, with the instruction of the negroes in literature and religion." We cite these instances to show that the sacredness of slavery from discussion was a discovery of much later date. So also was the theory of its Divine origin, — a theological slough in which, we are sorry to say, Northern men have shown themselves readiest to b mire themselves. It was when slave labor and slave breeding began to bring large and rapid profits, by the extension of cotton-culture consequent on the invention of Whitney's gin, and the purchase of Louisiana, that slavery was found to be identical with religion, and, like Duty, a "daughter of the voice of God." Till it became rich, it had been content with claiming the municipal law for its parent, but now it was easy to find heralds who

could blazon for it a nobler pedigree. Men who looked upon dancing as sinful could see the very beauty of holiness in a system like this! It is consoling to think that, even in England, it is little more than a century since the Divine right of kings ceased to be defended in the same way, by making the narrative portions of Scripture doctrinal. Such strange things have been found in the Bible, that we are not without hope of the discovery of Christianity there one of these days.

The influence of the Southern States in the national politics was due mainly to the fact of their having a single interest on which they were all united, and, though fond of contrasting their more chivalric character with the commercial spirit of the North, it will be found that profit has been the motive to all the encroachments of Slavery. These encroachments first assumed the offensive with the annexation of Texas. In the admission of Missouri, though the Free States might justly claim a right to fix the political destiny of half the territory, bought with the common money of the nation, and though events have since proved that the compromise of 1820 was a fatal mistake, yet, as slavery was already established there, the South might, with some show of reason, claim to be on the defensive. In one sense, it is true, every enlargement of the boundaries of slavery has been an aggression. For it cannot with any fairness be assumed that the framers of the Constitution intended to foreordain a perpetual balance of power between the Free and the Slave States. If they had, it is morally certain that they would not so have arranged the basis of representation as to secure to the South an unfair preponderance, to be increased with every addition of territory. It is much more probable that they expected the Southern States to fall more and more into a minority of population and wealth, and were willing to strengthen this minority by yielding it somewhat more than its just share of power in Congress. Indeed, it was mainly on the ground of the undue advantage which the South would gain, politically, that the admission of Missouri was distasteful to the North.

It was not till after the Southern politicians had firmly established their system of governing the country by an alliance with the Democratic party of the Free States, on the basis of a

division of offices, that they dreamed of making their "institution" the chief concern of the nation. As we follow Mr. Greeley's narrative, we see them first pleading for the existence of slavery, then for its equality, and at last claiming for it an absolute dominion. Such had been the result of uniform concession on the part of the North for the sake of Union, such the decline of public spirit, that, within sixty years of the time when slaveholders like George Mason of Virginia could denounce slavery for its inconsistency with the principles on which our Revolution had triumphed, the leaders of a party at the North claiming a kind of patent in the rights of man as an expedient for catching votes were decrying the doctrines of the Declaration of Independence as visionary and impracticable. Was it the Slave or the Free States that had just cause to be alarmed for their peculiar institutions? And, meanwhile, it had been discovered that slavery was conservative! It would protect a country in which almost every voter was a landholder from any sudden frenzy of agrarianism! In the South it certainly conserved a privileged class, and prevented a general debauch of education; but in the North it preserved nothing but political corruption, subserviency, cant, and all those baser qualities which unenviably distinguish man from the brutes.

The nation had paid ten millions for Texas, an extension of the area of freedom, as it was shamelessly called, which was to raise the value of slaves in Virginia, according to Mr. Upshur, and did raise it, fifty per cent. It was next proposed to purchase Cuba for one hundred millions, or to take it by force if Spain refused to sell. And all this for fear of abolition. This was paying rather dearly for our conservative element, it should seem, especially when it stood in need of such continual and costly conservation. But it continued to be plain to a majority of voters, that democratic institutions absolutely demanded a safeguard against democracy, and that the only insurance was something that must be itself constantly insured at more and more ruinous rates. It continued to be plain also that slavery was purely a matter of local concern, though it could help itself to the national money, force the nation into an unjust war, and stain its reputation in Europe with the buccaneering

principles proclaimed in the Ostend Manifesto. All these were plainly the results of the ever-increasing and unprovoked aggressions of Northern fanaticism. To be the victims of such injustice seemed not displeasing to the South. Let us sum up the items of their little bill against us. They demanded Missouri, — we yielded; they could not get along without Texas, — we *re*-annexed it; they must have a more stringent fugitive-slave law, — we gulped it; they must no longer be insulted with the Missouri Compromise, — we repealed it. Thus far the North had surely been faithful to the terms of the bond. We had paid our pound of flesh whenever it was asked for, and with fewer wry faces, inasmuch as Brother Ham underwent the incision. Not at all. We had only surrendered the principles of the Revolution; we must give up the theory also, if we would be loyal to the Constitution.

We entirely agree with Mr. Greeley, that the quibble which would make the Constitution an antislavery document because the word *slave* is not mentioned in it, cannot stand a moment if we consider the speeches made in Convention, or the ideas by which the action of its members was guided. But the question of slavery in the Territories stands on wholly different ground. We know what the opinions of the men were who drafted the Constitution, by their own procedure in passing the Ordinance of 1787. That the North should yield *all* claim to the common lands was certainly a new interpretation of constitutional law. And yet this was practically insisted on by the South, and its denial was the more immediate occasion of rupture between the two sections. But, in our opinion, the real cause which brought the question to the decision of war was the habit of concession on the part of the North, and the inability of its representatives to say *No*, when policy as well as conscience made it imperative. Without that confidence in Northern pusillanimity into which the South had been educated by their long experience of this weakness, whatever might have been the secret wish of the leading plotters, they would never have dared to rush their fellow-citizens into a position where further compromise became impossible.

Inextricably confused with the question of Slavery, and essential to an understanding of the motives and character of the

Southern people as distinguished from their politicians, is the doctrine of State Rights. On this topic also Mr. Greeley furnishes all the data requisite to a full understanding of the matter. The dispute resolves itself substantially into this: whether the adoption of the Constitution established a union or a confederacy, a government or a league, a nation or a committee. This also is a question which can only be determined by a knowledge of what the Convention of 1787 intended and accomplished, and the States severally acceded to, — it being of course understood that no State had a right, or at the time pretended any right, to accept the Constitution with mental reservations. On this subject we have ample and unimpeachable testimony in the discussions which led to the calling of the Convention and the debates which followed in the different conventions of the States called together to decide whether the new frame of government should be accepted or rejected. The conviction that it was absolutely necessary to remodel the Articles of Confederation was wrought wholly by an experience of the inadequacy of the existing plan (under which a single State could oppose its *veto* to a law of Congress), from the looseness of its cohesion and its want of power to compel obedience. The principle of coercive authority, which was represented as so oppressively unconstitutional by the friends of Secession in the North as well as the South four years ago, was precisely that which, as its absence had brought the old plan to a dead-lock, was deemed essential to the new. The formal proposal for a convention, originated by Hamilton, was seconded by one State after another. Here is a sample of Virginian public sentiment at that time, from the “instructions to their representatives,” by several constituencies: “Government without coercion is a proposition at once so absurd and self-contradictory, that the idea creates a confusion of the understanding; it is form without substance, at best a body without a soul.” Oliver Ellsworth, advocating the adoption of the Constitution in the Convention of Connecticut, says: “A more energetic system is necessary. The present is merely advisory. It has no coercive power. Without this, government is ineffectual, or rather is no government at all.” Earlier than this Madison had claimed “an implied right of coercion” even for the Confederate Con-

gress, and Jefferson had gone so far as to say that they possessed it "by the law of nature." The leading objections to the new Constitution were such as to show the general belief that the State sovereignties were to be absorbed into the general government in all matters of national concern. But the unhappy ingenuity of Mr. Jefferson afterwards constructed that theory of strict construction which would enable any State to profit by the powers of the Constitution, so long as it was for her interest or convenience, and then, by pleading its want of powers, to resolve the helpless organization once more into the incoherence of confederacy. By this dexterous legerdemain, the Union became a string of juggler's rings, which seems a chain while it pleases the operator, but which, by bringing the strain on the weak point contrived for the purpose, is made to fall easily asunder and become separate rings again. An adroit use of this theory enabled the South to gain one advantage after another by threatening disunion, and led naturally, on the first effective show of resistance, to secession. But in order that the threat might serve its purpose without the costly necessity of putting it in execution, the doctrine of State rights was carefully inculcated at the South by the same political party which made belief in the value of the Union a fanaticism at the North. On one side of Mason and Dixon's line it was lawful, and even praiseworthy, to steal the horse; on the other, it was a hanging matter to look over the fence.

But in seeking for the cause of the rebellion, with any fairness toward the Southern people, and any wish to understand their motives and character, it would be unwise to leave out of view the fact that they have been carefully educated in the faith that secession is not only their right, but the only safeguard of their freedom. While it is perfectly true that the great struggle now going on is intrinsically between right and privilege, between law and license, and while on the part of its leaders the Southern revolt was a conspiracy against popular government, and an attempt to make a great Republic into a mere convenient drudge for Slavery, yet we should despair of our kind did we believe that the rank and file of the Confederate armies were consciously spending so much courage and endurance in behalf of barbarism. It is more consoling,

as it is nearer the truth, to think that they are fighting for what they have been taught to believe their rights, and their inheritance as a free people. The high qualities they have undoubtedly shown in the course of the war, their tenacity, patience, and discipline, show that, under better influences, they may become worthy to take their part in advancing the true destinies of America.

It is yet too early to speculate with much confidence on the remote consequences of the war. One of its more immediate results has already been to disabuse the Southern mind of some of its most fatal misconceptions as to Northern character. They thought us a trading people, incapable of lofty sentiment, ready to sacrifice everything for commercial advantage,—a heterogeneous rabble, fit only to be ruled by a superior race. They are not likely to make that mistake again, and must have learned by this time that the best blood is that which has in it most of the iron of purpose and constancy. War, the sternest and dearest of teachers, has already made us a soberer and older people on both sides. It has brought questions of government and policy home to us as never before, and has made us feel that citizenship is a duty to whose level we must rise, and not a privilege to which we are born. The great principles of humanity and politics, which had faded into the distance of abstraction and history, have been for four years the theme of earnest thought and discussion at every fireside and wherever two men met together. They have again become living and operative in the heart and mind of the nation. What was before a mighty population, is grown a great country united in one hope, inspired by one thought, and welded into one power. But have not the same influences produced the same result at the South, and created there also a nation hopelessly alien and hostile? To a certain extent this is true, but not in the unlimited way in which it is stated by enemies in England, or politicians at home, who would gladly put the people out of heart, because they themselves are out of office. With the destruction of slavery, the one object of the war will have been lost by the Rebels, and its one great advantage gained by the government. Slavery is by no means dead as yet, whether socially in its relation of man to man, or morally in its hold on

public opinion and its strength as a political superstition. But there is no party at the North, considerable in numbers or influence, which could come into power on the platform of making peace with the Rebels on their own terms. No party can get possession of the government which is not in sympathy with the temper of the people, and the people, forced into war against their will by the unprovoked attack of proslavery bigotry, are resolved on pushing it to its legitimate conclusion. War means now, consciously with many, unconsciously with most, but inevitably, abolition. Nothing can save slavery but peace. Let its doom be once accomplished, or its reconstruction (for reconstruction means nothing more) clearly seen to be an impossibility, and the bond between the men at the South who were willing to destroy the Union, and those at the North who only wish to save it, for the sake of slavery, will be broken. The ambitious in both sections will prefer their chances as members of a mighty empire to what would always be secondary places in two rival and hostile nations, powerless to command respect abroad or secure prosperity at home. The masses of the Southern people will not feel too keenly the loss of a kind of property in which they had no share, while it made them underlings, nor will they find it hard to reconcile themselves with a government from which they had no real cause of estrangement. If the war be waged manfully, as becomes a thoughtful people, without insult or childish triumph in success, if we meet opinion with wiser opinion, waste no time in badgering prejudice till it become hostility, and attack slavery as a crime against the nation, and not as individual sin, it will end, we believe, in making us the most powerful and prosperous community the world ever saw. Our example and our ideas will react more powerfully than ever on the Old World, and the consequence of a rebellion, aimed at the natural equality of all men, will be to hasten incalculably the progress of equalization over the whole earth. Above all, Freedom will become the one absorbing interest of the whole people, making us a nation alive from sea to sea with the consciousness of a great purpose and a noble destiny, and uniting us as slavery has hitherto combined and made powerful the most hateful aristocracy known to man.